

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of efficiently serving content in a distributed computing environment,  
2 comprising steps of:  
3 receiving usage metrics for a particular stored object; and  
4 evaluating the received usage metrics to determine whether the particular stored object is  
5 stored in an appropriate location, and moving the particular stored location if not.

1 2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are received from a server.

1 3. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the received usage metrics are gathered by a  
2 system responsible for storing the particular stored object.

1 4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are encoded in a Hypertext  
2 Transfer Protocol message header.

1 5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are encoded using syntax of  
2 a markup language.

1 6. The method according to Claim 5, wherein the markup language is HTML ("Hypertext  
2 Markup Language").

1 7. The method according to Claim 6, wherein the syntax comprises a "META" tag using an

2 "HTTP-EQUIV" attribute syntax.

1 8. The method according to Claim 6, wherein the syntax comprises a "META" tag using a  
2 "NAME" attribute syntax.

1 9. The method according to Claim 6, wherein the syntax comprises a specially-denoted  
2 comment.

1 10. The method according to Claim 5, wherein the markup language is XML ("Extensible  
2 Markup Language").

1 11. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are received in response to a  
2 query for remotely-stored usage metric information.

1 12. The method according to Claim 11, wherein the query uses a WebDAV request.

1 13. The method according to Claim 12, wherein a response to the WebDAV request specifies  
2 usage metrics gathered by at least one server.

1 14. The method according to Claim 4, wherein the usage metrics are encoded using one or  
2 more cookies.

1 15. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are encoded in a Wireless  
2 Session Protocol message header.

1 16. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expected popularity  
2 values.

1 17. The method according to Claim 16, wherein the expected popularity values are provided  
2 by a user.

1 18. The method according to Claim 16, wherein the expected popularity values are predicted  
2 by a content management system.

1 19. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are received as meta-data on  
2 a file access message.

1 20. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising steps of:  
2 gathering usage metrics by a server; and  
3 sending the gathered usage metrics from the server; and  
4 wherein the received usage metrics are those sent from the server.

1 21. The method according to Claim 20, wherein the sending step operates in response to a  
2 triggering event.

1 22. The method according to Claim 21, wherein the triggering event comprises expiration of a  
2 timer.

1 23. The method according to Claim 21, wherein the triggering event comprises exceeding a  
2 threshold.

1 24. The method according to Claim 21, wherein the triggering event comprises receiving a  
2 query for the usage metrics.

1 25. The method according to Claim 20, wherein the gathering step further comprises  
2 gathering the usage metrics by analyzing an access log.

1 26. The method according to Claim 20, wherein the gathering step further comprises  
2 gathering the usage metrics by tracking access requests at the server.

1 27. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as a  
2 mnemonic.

1 28. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as a scaled  
2 number.

1 29. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as a  
2 percentage of access requests.

1 30. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as an actual  
2 number of access requests.

1 31. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as a ranking.

1 32. A system for efficiently serving content in a distributed computing environment using a  
2 network-attached storage ("NAS") system, comprising steps of:

3 means for receiving, by a component of the NAS system, usage metrics for a particular  
4 stored object; and

5 means for evaluating the received usage metrics to determine whether the particular stored  
6 object is stored in an appropriate location, and for moving the particular stored location if not.

1 33. The system according to Claim 32, further comprising:

2 means for gathering usage metrics by a server; and

3 means for sending the gathered usage metrics from the server; and

4 wherein the received usage metrics are those sent from the server.

1 34. A computer program product for efficiently serving content using a network-attached  
2 storage ("NAS") system, the computer program product embodied on one or more computer-

3 usable media and comprising:

4 computer readable program code means for receiving, by a component of the NAS  
5 system, usage metrics for a particular stored object; and

6 computer readable program code means for evaluating the received usage metrics to  
7 determine whether the particular stored object is stored in an appropriate location, and for moving  
8 the particular stored location if not.

1 35. The computer program product according to Claim 34, further comprising:

2 computer readable program code means for gathering usage metrics by a server; and

3 computer readable program code means for sending the gathered usage metrics from the  
4 server; and

5 wherein the received usage metrics are those sent from the server.